

Remarks

Claims 1-20 were pending in the application. Claims 1-4, 6, 8-11, 15 and 16 were rejected, claim 5, 7 and 12-14 were objected to, and claims 17-20 were withdrawn. By this Amendment, claims 1, 3, 5, 10, 12-14 and 16 have been amended and claims 2 and 11 have been cancelled. Reconsideration of the claims is respectfully requested. No new matter has been added.

Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. §112

Claim 16 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph as being indefinite. Specifically, the Examiner stated that it was unclear whether the “pair of bushings” recited in claim 16 was intended to be the same feature as previously set forth in claim 10. Claim 16 has been amended to draw antecedent basis from claim 10. Consequently, Applicants believe this rejection has been overcome.

Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. § 102

Claims 1-4 and 6 were rejected under § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,183,045 issued to Marfilius et al. (hereinafter “Marfilius ‘045”). In the Office Action, the Examiner indicated that claim 5 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Applicants have rewritten claim 5 in independent form. More specifically, claim 1 has been amended to incorporate the limitations of claims 2 and 5. As such, independent claim 1 is believed to be in condition for allowance. Since claims 3, 4 and 6 depend on amended claim 1, Applicants believe these claims are allowable for the same reasons.

Claims 1 and 8 were rejected under § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,290,091 issued to Dellano et al. (hereinafter “Dellano ‘091”). As discussed above, amended claim 1 is believed to be in condition for allowance. Since claim 8 depends on amended claim 1, this rejection is believed to be overcome for the same reasons.

Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claim 9 was rejected under § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Marfilius '045 in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,068,338 issued to Takei et al. (hereinafter "Takei '338"). Claim 9 depends on amended claim 1. Consequently, Applicants believe this rejection has been rendered moot for the reasons previously discussed.

Claim 9 was rejected under § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Dellano '091 in view of Takei '338. Claim 9 depends on amended claim 1. Consequently, Applicants believe this rejection has been rendered moot for the reasons previously discussed.

Claims 10, 15 and 16 were rejected under § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Marfilius '045 in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,250,714 issued to Nakano et al. (hereinafter "Nakano '714"). In the Office Action, the Examiner indicated that claim 12 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Applicants have rewritten claim 12 in independent form. More specifically, claim 10 has been amended to incorporate the limitations of claims 11 and 12. As such, independent claim 10 is believed to be in condition for allowance. Since claims 15 and 16 depend on amended claim 10, Applicants believe the rejection of these claims has been overcome for the same reasons.

Claims 10, 11, 15 and 16 were rejected under § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Dellano '091 in view of Nakano '714. As discussed above, amended claim 10 is believed to be in condition for allowance. Claims 11, 15 and 16 depend on amended claim 10. Thus, the rejection of these claims is believed to be overcome for the same reasons.

Conclusion

Applicants have made a genuine effort to respond to the Examiner's objections and rejections in advancing the prosecution of this case. Applicants believe all formal and substantive requirements for patentability have been met and that this case is in condition for allowance, which action is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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